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BYLINE: By MAUREEN SANTINI, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: LANGLEY, Va.

BODY:

President Reagan, making his first trip to CIA headquarters here, today signed into law a controversial bill making it a crime to disclose the names of American spies, whom he called "heroes of a grim twilight struggle."

The president, speaking to CIA employees, said, "You are on the winning side."

Under the new law, disclosure of spies' names is illegal even if the information is contained in public records.

The president said the measure symbolized that "while we remain tolerant and flexible, we retain our good sense" to protect those carrying out dangerous assignments.

"We're grateful to you; we thank you; we're proud of you," the president said in a ceremony on the heavily guarded CIA grounds outside Washington, after touring the spy agency's offices.

"You are the tripwire across which the forces of oppression and tyranny must stumble in their quest for world-wide domination," Reagan said.

The president said he was saluting "the men and women who are locked in a sometimes deadly conflict with the forces of totalitarianism, the men and women whose best accomplishments, whose greatest deeds can never be known to their countrymen ... those heroes of a grim twilight struggle are those of you who serve here in the Central Intelligence Agency, whether you work in Langley or in far-away nations. ..."

"You must be the cutting edge of freedom. You must serve in silence and carry your special burden. But let me assure you," the president said, "you are on the winning side."

The bill, formally called the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, was passed by both the House and the Senate by overwhelming margins earlier this month.

It provides prison terms of up to 10 years and fines of \$50,000 for government employees who expose the identities of covert U.S. intelligence agents living in foreign countries.

Those outside the government, including reporters and scholars, could be imprisoned up to four years and fined \$15,000 for revealing names of spies if there was reason to believe such actions would disrupt American intelligence operations.

The bill would, for the first time, make it possible for someone to be prosecuted for revealing publicly available information.

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